

AWDURDOD TÂN AC ACHUB CANOLBARTH A GORLLEWIN CYMRU



MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION BY THE PERFORMANCE, AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING

COFNODION CYFARFOD Y PWYLLGOR ADOLYGU AC ARCHWILIO PERFFORMIAD MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DYDD LLUN, 23 EBRILL 2018
MONDAY, 23 APRIL 2018

YSTAFELL CAER, PENCADLYS Y GWASANAETH TÂN, CAERFYRDDIN
CAER SUITE, FIRE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS, CARMARTHEN

10.00 – 12.10

67% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennolyn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CHAIR	Councillor T Hennegan
IS-GADEIRYDD/DEPUTY CHAIR:	Councillor D E Williams
AELODAU/MEMBERS:	Cyng/Cllrs: M Crowley, K Curry, L Frayling, K Laurie-Parry, R Lewis, A Llewelyn, G Tanner, G Walker
YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:	K Broom, J Curtice, P James, T Van-Rees, J Warman
YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:	D Daycock, R Quin, R Thomas, K Jones, M Harries, S Jenkins, C Flannery, C Jackson, S Mansbridge, H Pugh (Carmarthenshire County Council), R Hemingway (Carmarthenshire County Council), J Evans (Wales Audit Office)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Broom, J Curtice, P James, T Van-Rees and J Warman.

2 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

All Members present declared that they had a personal interest in any business relating to, or affecting their own Constituent Authority.

3 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PERSONAL MATTERS

The Chair welcomed the Authority's Internal Auditor, Ms H Pugh of Carmarthenshire County Council to the meeting to present item 5 of the agenda.

A warm welcome was also extended to Mr J Evans of the Wales Audit Office who was in attendance in respect of item 9 of the agenda.

The Chair was delighted to report that Mick Crennell, the Service's former Deputy Chief Fire Officer, had recently been appointed as Chief Fire Officer of Avon Fire and Rescue Service. The Committee extended their best wishes to Chief Fire Officer Crennell in his new role and requested that a letter of congratulations be issued in this regard.

4 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2018

The minutes of the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 29 January 2018 were confirmed as a true record of proceedings.

MATTERS ARISING

Page 1, Item 3, Paragraph 3 – Councillor G Walker expressed his disagreement that the Joint Public Service Centre had delivered benefits in the form of interoperability, improvements in the co-ordinated response to incidents and data-intelligence sharing. Cllr G Walker reported that concerns had been raised by Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service employees within the Joint Public Service Centre alleging that they were dissatisfied with their new working arrangements and accordingly sickness absence rates had increased.

The Temporary Director of Operational Support and Improvement (T/DOSI) assured Committee that the Executive Leadership Team recognised the significant changes to the working environment for JPSC employees. It was emphasised that open channels of communication were being maintained throughout the transition period and structural mechanisms were in place to deal with staff concerns, though no formal complaints had been received. Furthermore, it was emphasised that the Authority's statutory duty for receiving and dispatching emergency calls had not been adversely affected following the establishment of the new JPSC. A number of Members acknowledged that significant changes to employee working environment and culture would take time to bed in, following which further examples of interoperability would become apparent. Furthermore, Councillor E Williams commented that staff on duty during the Authority's visit to the JPSC appeared satisfied within their

working environment and had provided Members with examples of collaboration with the Police Force for the benefit of the communities served.

In response to a request made by Councillor G Walker, the T/DOSI clarified that the questionnaires completed by JPSC employees on 23 January 2018 related to a two-stage debrief to gather the views of employees in respect of their new working environment, with the final full structured debrief scheduled to be conducted in September 2018 whereby sufficient time would have elapsed to gather evidence and data for evaluation. The T/DOSI agreed to provide Members with the outcome of the first stage debrief once the report had been compiled, in addition to the final debrief results which would be provided on conclusion of the process.

In response to a further request made by Councillor G Walker, The Director of Resources confirmed that sickness absence rates for the Service's JPSC employees for the period 01.04.17 – 28.02.18 equated to 9.32 shifts lost, compared with 9.09 for the reporting period 01.04.16 – 28.02.17. At the request of Councillor G Walker, it was agreed that enquiries would be made with a view to providing Committee with day-by-day sickness absence figures, including overtime costs since the establishment of the JPSC.

5 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT BY THE INTERNAL AUDITOR ON THE INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2017/18

Ms H Pugh of Carmarthenshire County Council provided Committee with an outline of findings arising from the reviews of the Debtors, Treasury Management Investments, Creditors and Main Accounting financial systems undertaken in line with the Internal Audit Plan for 2017/18 set out at Appendix 5 of the report.

Members were referred to Appendix 1, namely the Debtors Review 2017/18 and provided with an overview of the information detailed within the report. It was noted that the introduction of the automated process following the release of the upgraded Agresso module would alleviate time constraints on staff and enable more accurate monitoring of debts. An overview of the recommendations by the Internal Auditors was provided to Members, which comprised of minor issues and control issues required to strengthen existing procedures. In response to a query by Councillor M Crowley in respect of the number and amount of suppressed accounts/accounts placed on hold, it was confirmed that the quantities and associated figures would be obtained and circulated to Members.

Following a query from Councillor A Llewelyn regarding delays in raising invoices, Ms H Pugh clarified that any delays in this regard did not present VAT implications or leave the Authority at risk of financial loss.

Councillor A Llewelyn enquired regarding the outstanding debts associated with the Rescue 365 Community Interest Company and it was confirmed that these did present a risk to the Authority, however an action plan had been implemented by the Service to review and recover the debt and agree the recovery plan with Rescue 365. Members were further informed, following a query from Councillor K Laurie-Parry, that whilst the Authority had not previously pursued court action in respect of debt recovery, it was considered best practice to implement clear, automated processes in place where possible.

Attention was drawn to Appendix 2 of the report, relating to the Treasury Management Investments, whereby it was concluded that the function was found to be managed to an adequate standard, though areas for improvement had been identified. Members were asked to consider the 3 recommendations outlined within the Action Plan which would strengthen existing controls, which was agreed.

Ms Pugh then provided Members with an overview of the Creditors Review for 2017/18 set out at Appendix 3 of the report which had presented a medium risk to the Authority due to the volume and value of transactions processed. It was reported that some issues had been identified for improvement in terms of the implementation of procedures to demonstrate a good control over the processing of creditor payments, and these were presented to Members within the Action Plan.

Committee Members were also presented with an Internal Audit Report on the main accounting function, set out at Appendix 4, where it was confirmed that the main accounting system had been audited in respect of systems associated with budget setting, budget monitoring, administration such as virements and journals along with the coding structure within the financial management system. Following a response to a query by Councillor A Llewelyn, the Head of Finance clarified that the Service had demonstrated that there had been no discrepancies between the approved budget figures authorised by the Authority and the budget figures uploaded onto the financial system, and as such the report would be updated accordingly.

In response to a query by Councillor R Lewis, the Head of Finance confirmed that the figure relating to the total amount of bad debts would be confirmed to him in due course.

The Head of Finance confirmed to Councillor M Crowley that approval of the Treasurer/ Section 151 Officer was required for virement of individual sums in excess of £50,000. Furthermore, it was reported that approval of the Authority and the constituent authorities would be required for supplementary estimates after consideration of a report from the Treasurer and the Chief Fire Officer.

The Head of Finance confirmed to Members that all of the recommendations made by the Auditor had been acknowledged and accepted by the Service and were either in the process of, or had already been addressed.

In response to a request made by Councillor K Laurie-Parry, Ms H Pugh agreed to include estimated figures within future reports.

Members were assured that all recommendations within the 3 reviews undertaken by the Internal Auditors had been agreed with the senior management team and the required actions were being addressed.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted, and the recommendations within the 3 reviews were agreed.

6 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2017 – 31 MARCH 2018

The Head of Corporate Communications and Business Development provided Committee with an overview of the Compliments and Complaints report for the period 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018.

Consideration was given to the 24 complaints which had been received and investigated during the reporting period in terms of their nature/type, outcome and location. Members were also provided with a breakdown of the further 12 areas of concern/comments/feedback which had been recorded but not progressed through the complaints procedure.

Members considered the 52 Compliments recorded during the reporting period, though it was recognised that the number of unrecorded compliments was likely to be significantly higher. Committee Members were pleased to note the number of expressions of appreciation received, which was considered a valuable tool in monitoring the effectiveness of a good service provided. However, it was acknowledged that further improvements could be made to showcase the excellent work being undertaken on a daily basis across the Service.

The Committee acknowledged the positive report which had to be evaluated in the context of the low number of complaints received from within such a large geographical area.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report on Compliments and Complaint be noted.

7 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRESS REPORT – QUARTER 4 2017/18

The Temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer (T/DCFO) presented the Performance and Improvement Progress Report – Quarter 4 2017/18.

Members were provided with a detailed analysis of progress made on Performance Indicators for the reporting period 1st January 2018 – 31 March 2018 in respect of the number of fire incidents attended, false alarms, deliberate fires, hoax calls received, road traffic collisions, flooding, medical response and fire deaths and injuries.

Reference was made to the projected decrease of 6.7% in the number of incidents attended which could, in part, be attributable to the ongoing negotiations in respect of medical response. In response to a query from Councillor K Curry, the T/DCFO confirmed that the Service had been mobilised to 3,674 medical response incidents during 2016/17 compared with 2,488 for 2017/18.

Members' attention was drawn to Part 2 of Appendix 1 of the report, whereby the T/DCFO provided Committee with a synopsis of progress made against each of the Authority's 12 improvement objectives, together with an explanation of how each objective enabled the Service to meet its strategic priorities and contributed to meeting the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Members were pleased to note that

significant progress had been made within the majority of improvement objectives, 10 of which had been allocated green status, 1 amber status and 1 red status.

Members' attention was also drawn to the Emergency Services Network (ESN) objective which would provide an innovative and unique solution to the provision of emergency service communications in the United Kingdom. The T/DCFO reported that the programme timetable was being revised by the Home Office and it was envisaged that implementation of the first element of the project would be postponed until 2021 at the earliest.

Committee Members were provided with a synopsis of the progress made against the Service's corporate projects for Safe, Well and Independent Living (SWAIL), Northern Workshops, Integrated Software Platform, On-Call, Breathing Apparatus and the Compact Appliance, as set out in Part 3 of Appendix 1 of the report.

A discussion ensued on the imminent introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation. Committee Members emphasised the importance of data sharing with other agencies as a means of reducing the number of fire incidents. The Corporate Head of Prevention and Protection confirmed that appropriate protocols were adhered to in respect of the sharing of information amongst key agencies to provide bespoke services according to the requirements of individuals.

In response to comments made by Councillor G Walker regarding the Compact Appliance, The T/DCFO informed Members that the vehicle had been trialled at various stations in order to inform the Service's vehicle disposition strategy to ensure that resources were matched to risk.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report and progress made to date be noted.

8 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE BUSINESS RISK REGISTER UPDATE REPORT TO APRIL 2018

The Temporary Director of Operational Support and Improvement (T/DOSI) presented the Business Risk Update Report to April 2018 to the Committee.

Members were referred to the Business Risk Register Overview set out at Appendix A, Risk Assessment Matrix for Risk Register at Appendix B, the Business Risk Register Decision Log set out at Appendix C and the eight identified risks set out therein.

A summary of the latest considerations by the Business Risk Management Group (BRMG) for each of the risks contained within the Business Risk Register Decision Log was given to Members. It was noted that Industrial Relations had been categorised as high risk, that 6 areas relating to Regulatory Body Compliance, Change/Risk Management, Business Continuity/Interruption, Attendance Management Procurement and Security had been categorised as medium risk, and that 1 area relating to Road Risk had been allocated as low risk. Members discussed and acknowledged the issues raised in the report.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee note the report and acknowledge the ongoing progress to both identify and manage matters of business risk affecting the Service.

9 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2016-17

The T/DCFO presented the Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report 2016-17 to Members which encapsulated the audit work undertaken within the Authority during the reporting period and had been published in February 2018. It was reported that the Auditor General had concluded that the Authority had met its statutory requirements in relation to continuous improvement.

Committee gave consideration to and discussed the recommendations and proposals for improvement set out within the report, all of which were, or had already been, addressed.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

10 TO CONSIDER ANY OTHER ITEM OF BUSINESS THAT BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, THE CHAIR DECIDES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY PURSUANT TO SECTION 100(B)(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 12.10.